

Vatican-Issued Document Explains 'No Salvation Outside Church' Axiom

The Holy Office Letter To Archbishop Cushing

Presented here are the texts of three documents relating to the problem of the Rev. Leonard Feeney and the St. Benedict Center of Cambridge, Mass., which were published on the front page of the Sept. 6, 1952, issue of The Pilot, official organ of the Archdiocese of Boston. The documents are (1) an English translation approved by the Holy See of a letter sent by the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office on Aug. 8, 1949, to Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston; (2) a statement issued under the name of Archbishop Cushing on Sept. 4, 1952, setting forth the circumstances leading to the publication of the letter from the Holy Office; and (3) an appeal by Archbishop Cushing to all the faithful.

(ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

THE SUPREME SACRED CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY OFFICE

From the Headquarters of the Holy Office

August 8, 1949

Protocol Number 122/49.

Your Excellency:

This supreme Sacred Congregation has followed very attentively the rise and the course of the grave controversy stirred up by certain associates of "St. Benedict Center" and "Boston College" in regard to the interpretation of that axiom: "Outside the Church there is no salvation."

After having examined all the documents that are necessary or useful in this matter, among them information from your Chancery, as well as appeals and reports in which the associates of "St. Benedict Center" explain their opinions and complaints, and also many other documents pertinent to the controversy, officially collected, the same Sacred Congregation is convinced that the unfortunate controversy arose from the fact that the axiom: "outside the Church there is no salvation," was not correctly understood and weighed, and that the same controversy was rendered more bitter by serious disturbance of discipline arising from the fact that some of the associates of the institutions mentioned above refused reverence and obedience to legitimate authorities.

Accordingly, the Most Eminent the Most Reverend Cardinals of this Supreme Congregation, in a plenary session, held on Wednesday, July 27, 1949, decreed, and the August Pontiff in an audience on the following Thursday, July 28, 1949, decreed to give his approval, that the following explanations pertinent to the doctrine, and also that invitations and exhortations relevant to discipline be given:

We are bound by divine and Catholic faith to believe all those things which are contained in the word of God, whether it be Scripture or Tradition, and are pro-

Statement Issued By Archbishop Cushing

The Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office has examined again the problem of Father Leonard Feeney and St. Benedict Center. Having studied carefully the publications issued by the Center, and having considered all the circumstances of this case, the Sacred Congregation has ordered me to publish, in its entirety, the letter which the same Congregation sent to me on the 8th of August, 1949. The Supreme Pontiff, His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, has given full approval to this decision. In due obedience, therefore, we publish, in its entirety, the Latin text of the letter as received from the Holy Office with an English translation of the same approved by the Holy See.

Given at Boston, Massachusetts, the 4th day of September, A.D. 1952
WALTER J. FURLONG,
Chancellor

+ RICHARD J. CUSHING,
Archbishop of Boston.

vate judgments that Our Saviour gave for explanation those things that are contained in the deposit of faith, but to the teaching authority of the Church.

Now, in the first place, the Church teaches that in this matter there is question of a most strict command of Jesus Christ. For He explicitly enjoined on His apostles to teach all nations to observe all things whatsoever He Himself had commanded (Matt., 28: 19-20).

Now, among the commandments of Christ, that one holds not the least place, by which we are commanded to be incorporated by Baptism into the Mystical Body of Christ, which is the Church, and to remain united to Christ and to His Vicar, through whom He Himself in a visible manner governs the Church on earth.

Therefore, no one will be saved who, knowing the Church to have been divinely established by Christ, nevertheless refuses to submit to the Church or withholds obedience from the Roman Pontiff, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

Not only did the Saviour command that all nations should enter the Church, but He also decreed the Church to be a means of salvation, without which no one can enter the kingdom of eternal glory.

In His infinite mercy God

willed that the effects, necessary for one to be saved, of those helps to salvation which are directed toward man's end, not by intrinsic necessity, but only by divine institution, can be obtained in certain circumstances when those helps are used in desire and longing. This we see clearly stated in the Sacred Council of Trent, both in reference to the Sacrament of Regeneration and in reference to the Sacrament of Penance (Denzinger, nn. 707, 807).

The same in its own degree must be asserted of the Church, in as far as she is the general help to salvation. Therefore, that one may obtain eternal salvation, it is not always required that he be incorporated into the Church actually as a member, but it is necessary that at least he be united to her by desire and longing.

However, this desire need not always be explicit, as it is in catechumens; but when a person is involved in invincible ignorance, God accepts also an implicit desire, so called because it is included in that good disposition of soul whereby a person wishes his will to be conformed to the will of God.

THESE THINGS are clearly taught in that dogmatic letter which was issued by the Sovereign Pontiff, Pope Pius XII, on

PLAN NCCW CONVENTION



Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston, Episcopal Chairman of the Department of Lay Organizations, National Catholic Welfare Conference, reviews the program of the 26th National Convention of the National Council of Catholic Women, to be held in Seattle, Wash., September 20-24, with Margaret Mesleby, Executive Secretary, N.C.W. The prelate said: "This program will serve to help delegates from all parts of the country to carry on their great work in the apostolate of the laity."

June 29, 1943, "On the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ." (AAS, Vol. 35, an. 1943, p. 193 ff.) For in this letter the Sovereign Pontiff clearly distinguishes between those who are actually incorporated into the Church as members and those who are united to the Church only by desire.

Discussing the members of which the Mystical Body is composed here on earth, the same August Pontiff says: "Actually only those are to be included as members of the Church who have been baptized and profess the true faith, and who have not been so unfortunately as to separate themselves from the Unity of the Body, or been excluded by legitimate authority for grave faults committed."

Toward the end of this same Encyclical Letter, when most affectionately inviting to unity those who do not belong to the body of the Catholic Church, he mentions those who "are related to the Mystical Body of the Redeemer by a certain unconscious yearning and desire," and these he by no means excludes from eternal salvation, but on the other hand states that they are in a condition "in which they cannot be sure of their salvation" since "they still remain deprived of those many heavenly gifts and helps which can only be enjoyed in the Catholic Church" (AAS, loc. cit. 243).

WITH THESE wise words he reproves both those who exclude from eternal salvation all united to the Church only by implicit desire, and those who falsely assert that men can be saved equally well in every religion (cf. Pope Pius IX, Allocution "Singulare quadam" in Denzinger, nn. 1641, ff. — also Pope Pius IX in the Encyclical Letter "Quanto conficiamur moerore" in Denzinger, n. 1677).

But it must not be thought that any kind of desire of entering the Church suffices that one may be saved. It is necessary that the desire by which one is related to the Church be animated by perfect charity. Nor can an implicit desire produce its effect, unless a person has supernatural faith: "For he who comes

by which all are bound of belonging to the true Church, and of coming to the authority of the Roman Pontiff and of the Bishops "whom the Holy Ghost has placed... to rule the Church." (Acts, 20:28).

Hence, one cannot understand how the St. Benedict Center can consistently claim to be a Catholic school and wish to be accounted such, and yet not conform to the prescription of Canons 1381 and 1382 of the Code of Canon Law, and continue to exist as a source of discord and rebellion against ecclesiastical authority and as a source of the disturbance of many consciences.

Furthermore, it is beyond understanding how a member of a religious institute, namely Father Feeney, presents himself as a "Defender of the faith," and at the same time does not hesitate to attack the catechetical instruction proposed by lawful authorities, and has not even feared to incur grave sanctions threatened by the sacred canons because of his serious violations of his duties as religious, a priest and an ordinary member of the Church.

Finally, it is in no wise to be tolerated that certain Catholics shall claim for themselves the right to publish a periodical, for the purpose of spreading theological doctrines, without the permission of competent Church Authority, called the "imprimatur," which is prescribed by the sacred canons.

Therefore, let them who in grave peril are ranged against the Church seriously bear in mind that after "Rome has spoken" they cannot be excused even by reason of good faith. Certainly, their bond and duty of obedience toward the Church is much graver than that of those who as yet are related to the Church "only by an unconscious desire." Let them realize that they are children of the Church, lovingly nourished by her with the milk of doctrine and the sacraments, and hence, having heard the clear voice of their Mother, they cannot be excused from culpable ignorance and therefore conclusions follow which regard discipline and conduct, and which cannot be unknown to those who vigorously defend the necessity

FROM THESE declarations which pertain to doctrine, certain conclusions follow which regard discipline and conduct, and which cannot be unknown to those who vigorously defend the necessity

Prelate's Appeal To St. Benedict Center Group

As the Spiritual Shepherd of the Archdiocese of Boston, my heart goes out in love to Father Feeney and to those who have been misled by false ideas. It is my fervent hope that now, after the Supreme Authority of the Church has spoken, Father Feeney and all his followers will prove themselves to be loyal children of the Church, and our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII. I invite all the faithful to join with me in the prayer.

+ RICHARD J. CUSHING,
Archbishop of Boston.

quired as necessary for salvation.

In sending this letter, I declare my profound esteem, and remain Your Excellency's most devoted

+ R. CARDINAL MARGHERITA SELVAGCIANI
A. Ottaviani, Assessor.

To His Excellency
Most Reverend Richard James Cushing
Archbishop of Boston.

NOW! by Francis Steinfeld

Cobh

Early good news, good following! See the new (first) issue!

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New Munich Archbishop Son Of Tailor

Munich (NC)—Archbishop-designate Josef Wendel, who was recently named to succeed the late Cardinal Faulhaber as Archbishop of Munich and Freising, rose, like his predecessor, from humble surroundings to one of the highest positions in the German hierarchy. The 61-year-old Archbishop-elect is the son of a tailor. The late Cardinal's father was a baker. The Archbishop-Elect was born on May 27, 1901, at Bleskastel, which at that time belonged to the Palatinate but is now in Saar territory. Both the father and mother of the new Munich Archbishop are still alive.

LeMoyné Offers Theology To Laymen

Syracuse, N. Y. (NC)—A college which attracted 700 adults with a non-credit course on "The Four Gospels and the Public Life of Christ" last year is expanding its program this Fall to include an advanced course of Theology for Laymen. Le Moyné College is offering both one-night-a-week courses for non-Catholics as well as Catholics. The courses have the same content as those offered in the college curriculum. Fee for each course is \$10 per semester.